

Liaison

Library Association News-Sheet

News Editors: R. G. Surridge and D. R. Jamieson

August 1958

STOP 'ILLEGAL' CHARGES

Finchley Labour Party have sent a memorandum to M.P.s, the Labour Party Executive, and the Library Association urging the abolition of charges made by public libraries for reserving books. The memorandum claims that such charges are a contravention of the Public Libraries Acts and are thus unlawful, and that in making them local authorities are exceeding their statutory powers. The memorandum refers to fines for overdue books, the charge occasionally made for borrowers' tickets, and subscriptions for special services such as gramophone records; but the body of the report is devoted to stating a case against the levying of charges for reserved books, which it condemns as "the most stupid and the least defensible" of the charges made by public libraries.

Two sides of the argument are developed against charging for reserving books: the purely legal aspect, and the general effect upon the library service in contemporary society. **Sir Edward Boyle** is quoted as saying: "It is not possible to isolate the library service from the education service", and the document goes on to state that the cumulative effect of these charges is to discourage the student (citing as an example the fact that to have borrowed from a public library all the documents required to produce the memorandum would have cost 21s. 6d.). There is, it says, similar discouragement to the discerning reader just at the time when the spread of higher education and the increase of papers carrying book reviews have lead to a more demanding taste on the part of the public. Instancing Finchley's charge of 6d. for reserving a book, the memorandum says this is equivalent to 13s. per annum if one book a fortnight is reserved, or 18s. for three books. The minimum subscription to Boots library is 15s., from which it concludes: "We have reached the ludicrous situation where the reasonably intelligent and demanding reader finds it more expensive to belong to the 'free' library than to the subscription library". A note in *Liaison* of January, referring to **Couldson and Purley** libraries, is quoted as evidence that in some authorities the charge for reserves has gone up, and it points out that when Finchley raised its reserve charge from 3d. to 6d. it resulted in an overall decrease in reserves of 14.4% (subsequently misquoted in *The Times* as 44.4%).

Evidence given to the Roberts Committee by the C.C.A., the A.M.C., and the L.A. is quoted as showing these bodies unanimous in supporting the view that the public library service should be free in all respects.

Turning to the legal aspect the document reiterates the opinion that the Public Libraries Acts render the exacting of any charges illegal and an unlawful extension of a local authority's powers. While the validity of this interpretation has never been tested in the Courts, authorities including Hewitt and the Kenyon Report are cited in support. Also, much attention is given to the fact that in the last four years 20 local authorities have sought and have been granted powers which legalize in all cases the levying of fines for overdue books, and in nine cases the charging for reserves as well.

The Finchley Labour Party calls for action on a number of points, including either the introduction of a Public Libraries Bill expressly forbidding charges for reserving books, or a test case in the Courts based on existing legislation. The memorandum concludes that there is a risk that if local authorities are compelled to abolish these charges the reserve service might suffer. This risk is considered to be slight since it would cause an administrative "upheaval" and a public outcry, and is justified because the Party believes that "the social service principle is of such paramount importance that, if necessary (which we hope it would not be) we would rather see the extent of the service diminished than the principle damaged".

Target

There has been an encouraging if not exactly overwhelming response to the notice ("Bullseye Wanted") in the June *Liaison* about the free monthly periodical on industrial productivity, published by the Central Office of Information. Librarians who still intend to apply to be added to the distribution list of *Target* are asked to note the new address to which applications should be made:

C. R. Dean, Esq.,
Publications Division,
Central Office of Information,
Hercules Road,
Westminster Bridge Road,
London, S.E.1.

6,000 Periodicals

The list of periodicals available at the Patent Office has now been published in a second edition, although its predecessor only appeared at the beginning of this year. The effective date of the earlier edition, however, was October 1956, and it listed roughly 4,500 titles. This second edition, in a much improved presentation, includes the 6,000-odd titles current during the first quarter of 1958.

PATENT OFFICE. *Periodical publications in the Patent Office library: list of current titles*. 2nd ed. London, H.M.S.O. 12s. 6d.

Books About the Job

Bermondsey Central Library, under the Metropolitan Special Collections scheme, holds over 4,000 volumes and pamphlets and 38 files of periodicals (excluding annuals) on librarianship and bibliography. A select classified catalogue (1954) with author index is available on application, and requests for loans should be addressed to the Chief Librarian, Bermondsey Central Library, Spa Road, London, S.E.16.

Orders Go West

A steady flow of orders is being received for the R. & S.L.'s Western Group publication entitled *Library resources in the West Midlands* (details of nearly 180 libraries and information sources in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffs., Warwickshire and Worcs.).

Alas, through a misunderstanding many orders have got the longitude roughly right, but not the latitude, being addressed to a technical library in the Bristol area. Will intending purchasers (and hesitant ones may be assured that this is 15s. well invested) please note that the correct address is:

Miss B. M. Elmore,
c/o Central Library,
Ratcliffe Place,
Birmingham, 1.

INTERVIEWEE—UGH!

According to "Librarians seek the facts" in the June *Liaison*, I may be required to question interviewees. This prospect sounds horrid to me. What are these strange things?

Midnight lucubration resulted in an idea: possibly—"people interviewed". But if so, why not say so? Perhaps our time is too valuable and cost of print too high to allow us to use two words where one, however tortured, would serve.

But, really, is our time quite so precious? I suggest that we should stand against such jargon and align the L.A. with others who endeavour to maintain some dignity in the use of English.

To refugees and patentees,
Licensees and mortgagees
And all the rest of that uneasy crew,
Wee hoped there would be added
nothing new.

But midst the curious things we have
to see

There comes now for 'interview', a
wee."

FRANCIS J. COOPER,
Lincoln Public Libraries.

(Wee cannot find a thing to say in our miserable defence. Mr. Cooper's indignation is perfectly justified. ... Thank goodness he spared us That Other Word in the penultimate line!—Eds.)

A PRINTER'S FAREWELL

At the annual meeting of the British Federation of Master Printers at Bournemouth in May, Mr. H. J. Jarrold, chairman of the Federation's technical committee, predicted the end of type. Any machinery which printers put in, he said, was going to be out of date within 10 years. Photo type-setting would be widely used within five years. Conventional printing from type was now virtually obsolete.

PUNCHING HOLES IN BROWNE

Has the Browne charging system "had it"? Is it nothing more than a positive anachronism in 1958? Does it really deserve the extravagant criticisms often levelled at it? In what circumstances is its use still acceptable? or economical?

At its next meeting in October the L.A. Research Committee is to consider a call by the A.A.L. for a fully costed study, by independent O. and M. experts, of the various book-charging systems. Quite apart from a strong temptation to conclude that the Browne system must be an O. and M. man's idea of a nightmare, it is reasonable to expect that answers to some of the much-voiced criticisms of conventional charging methods would also come out of such an investigation.

Meanwhile a growing number of authorities has already bade a librarian's farewell to the bookcard-and-pocket days and the questionable delights of "hunt the charge". *Token* systems operate at Westminster, East Suffolk County, Bromley and Worthing; *photo charging* at Wandsworth, Croydon, Finsbury, Woolwich and Hampstead; and now **Holborn** have adopted *punched card charging*. We had an opportunity to study the report by Mr. Swift, Borough Librarian, on the results of the punched card experiment which officially ended at the East Holborn Library on 31st July. The conclusions are encouraging.

Lunch time queues stretching out into the street, the need to obviate the resulting congestion, and the desire to increase the advisory capacity of an already hard-pressed staff are some of the familiar problems which Holborn has to solve. Moreover, the increased demand which is anticipated when the new Central Library is opened in about two years' time makes the need for a solution the more urgent. In the punched card charging system they believe they have their answer. The system makes part-time use of a Powers-Samas automatic key punch, sorter, and interpolator—for the rest of the time the equipment can be used by the Treasurer's Department; and a railway season-type ticket, in plastic (1s. if lost) is issued to each reader.

At the end of 4 months' trial Mr. Swift has been able to recommend—and have accepted—the general adoption of punched card charging at the East Holborn and the new Central libraries for these reasons: Queues on entry have been virtually *eliminated*—Speed at the exit counter is at least as good as with the Browne system—Visible checking of returned books for reserves functions well *and the service has been speeded up*—Counter routine is *down* and advisory service correspondingly *up*, although shortage of staff persists—Some improvement in time tables—The public likes the new system. And the bill? Slightly over £3½ thousand for an installation at both East Holborn and the new Central of fully automatic Powers-Samas equipment, which can serve both the libraries and the Treasurer's Department.

Liaison was also afforded the opportunity to see how **Croydon** has solved two of the snags attendant on the photocharging system they employ, namely the sorting of transaction cards and the speedy tracing of overdue books.

For two hours on Monday evenings a trained member of the staff operates the Powers-Samas Sorter, in the Treasurer's Department, which juggles the appropriate batch of transaction cards into flawless sequence and at an impressive speed. The cards then go into the Interpolator which compares them against a completely numbered run. Those rejected (i.e. the cards whose numbers are not resolved by the comparison) are fed into a Tabulator which then lists the numbers of the non-returned transactions. When projected the non-returns are quickly traced.

Mr. T. E. Callander, Chief Librarian, tells us that he would be pleased to demonstrate how things work, but with much of the equipment not belonging to his own department he asks that anyone interested shall make an appointment with him through their own chief officer.

Chelmsford are among the latest to depart from the traditional. A photocharger is to be installed for the autumn and preparatory work is already under way.

GETTING IT STRAIGHT

We are asked to point out that the Scandinavian Study Tour described in the June *Liaison* as "the first", was, in fact, preceded on two occasions by study tours organized by the Manchester and Loughborough library schools.

NWP ANNUAL LECTURE

The annual lecture of the London (NWP) School of Librarianship Students Association will take place at Chaucer House on 17th September at 6.30 p.m.

Pamela Frankau is the guest speaker and she is asking "Is the Novelist Necessary?"

GREATER LONDON LIBRARIES

L.A. Evidence to Royal Commission

"If some amalgamations of local authorities are found desirable and library services are required to conform to a pattern for other reasons, it is our view that a convenient size for such amalgamations would be areas containing a population in the region of 250,000 people, and that such amalgamations (at any rate in the middle ring) should be effected radially from inner London (in order that there might be easy movement between all parts of the new areas) rather than by a division of the whole region into 'clusters' of the present local authority areas, between the various parts of which movement by public transport is often difficult. It is believed that such areas would be convenient for many purposes besides those of public library service."

This is one of the recommendations of the L.A. Council in its evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London which was prepared after consultation with the London and Home Counties Branch and the Association of Metropolitan Chief Librarians. The general tenor of the memorandum agrees with the Association's evidence to the Roberts Committee and accordingly **it is recommended that country districts of over 60,000 population at present served by county systems should be allowed to have independent powers.** It is pointed out that there are ten such districts in the area, with two border line cases. Two of these are in Surrey and three in Essex, and it is not considered in these cases that withdrawal would embarrass those counties. "The others are in Middlesex and include about three-quarters of the population served by the county libraries. Their withdrawal would so disrupt the existing county library service that it would be necessary to withdraw library powers from the County Council and form the whole of Middlesex into local library areas large enough to function satisfactorily as independent library authorities. The central book stock and central organization of the present Middlesex County Library service should be preserved by making it the centre of the nearest convenient new municipal library area. An alternative would be to require those County Districts which are within the county library to remain within that system with any necessary local delegation of powers."

County districts between 40,000 and 60,000 at present within the county library systems should so continue, subject to the consent of the Minister of Education. Those not within the system should remain independent or surrender their powers with the consent of the Minister. As stated to the Roberts Committee, it is thought that save in exceptional circumstances, **districts of less than 40,000 population would be better served by being included in the County**

system. There are seven such authorities in Greater London—the **City of London**, the Metropolitan Boroughs of **Holborn** (22,640) and **Finsbury** (34,900), the boroughs of **Kingston-upon-Thames** (38,800) and **Beddington and Wallington** (32,620), and the urban districts of **Cheshunt** (27,000) and **Penge** (25,500); but by reason of their rateable value, day time population and expenditure, the **first three "are undoubtedly much better able to maintain public library services than many authorities with a considerably larger population and should retain their autonomy"**.

Greater London (as other places) is considered to need three types of library service (local, regional, and central). Good general collections with lending libraries, reading room, children's departments, and the services of qualified staff should be available so that one need not travel more than a mile to secure everyday library facilities. There should also be several larger reference libraries, lending departments with comprehensive stocks and special departments to serve local industrial, commercial and cultural needs, but it is reasonable to expect people to travel farther for these. It is pointed out that some of these needs are met by the co-operative schemes in operation in the Metropolitan Boroughs, but such schemes could be expanded and the work of the bodies responsible for co-operation in the Greater London area should be co-ordinated to increase efficiency.

Regard must be paid to the special factors of the area which include (a) the location of industry, (b) the concentration of commercial and professional activity, (c) the pattern of life and the communications in the area, (d) the tremendous daily movement of people to work, and (e) the large numbers who do not so move—housewives, children, and old people, for example.

O. S. TOMLINSON.

|| NEWSREEL ||

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER. When a public library at Charlotte, N. Carolina, U.S.A., declared a "forgiveness day" in an attempt to recover overdue books, a book which should have been returned in 1933 was handed in.

Bexley Heath. Still going strong is a wooden hut erected 23 years ago as a "temporary" Central Library for Bexley Heath, in Kent. "We don't like it at all", says the Borough Librarian. "In winter the hut is bitterly cold, and blazing hot in summer. I don't think there can be another central library in the whole of Britain to compare with it." The delay in building a new library is attributed to the credit squeeze.

Bradford. Location shooting on the film of John Braine's novel, *Room at the Top*, started recently at Bradford and the film will be completed at Shepperton Studios. Braine was formerly with West Riding County Libraries.

BONN DOWNS TOOLS. The library of Erlangen University has closed because of lack of funds to employ library assistants. The director said that repeated requests for funds have been ignored by the Bavarian Ministry of Education.

Caernarvonshire County Library were compelled to buy nearly 1,000 fewer books in 1957 due to the purchase price having risen nearly 15 per cent.

FOLK MUSIC LIBRARY. To commemorate the diamond jubilee of the Folk Song Society a £50,000 appeal has been launched "to endow for all time the library devoted to folk music at Cecil Sharp House". The library is the only one of its kind in the world. Contributions to—National Folk Music Fund, 2 Regents Park Road, N.W.1.

Fulham. Shorter hours introduced experimentally at the libraries last November, to aid the recruiting of staff by making working conditions more attractive, are to be continued permanently. Opening hours will now be 10 a.m. instead of 9.30 a.m., and Saturday closing will be 5.0 p.m. instead of 8.0 p.m.

Fulham are now using transport for the delivery of books to the homes of the house-bound; formerly the staff took them by hand. Social workers who are concerned with the welfare of the elderly and the sick are being advised of this "books on wheels" service.

Library for the Blind. The National Library for the Blind has opened the reconstructed building at Manchester to house the Northern branch of the N.L.B. These premises are still not adequate for the service to blind people in the north and £22,000 is lacking as well for the cost of the reconstruction.

Luton. If you are lost for something to do at weekends or on a day off in and around Luton then the Central Library may have the answer. The library has concentrated a stock of information about places of interest within reasonable travelling distance of the town. Places suitable for children to visit have been specially included.

Manchester. Six years ago the Libraries Committee took over full responsibility for its library theatre and for the second year running it has shown an overall profit. **This, Manchester's only professional repertory, is situated in the basement of the Central Library and has attracted an audience of over half a million in just three years.**

Nalگو has rejected a proposal to write a strike clause into its constitution. The proposal came from the Salford branch at the recent annual conference.

Oxford. A 21-acre site has been chosen by the University for building a group of 3 libraries—a law library, a library for the English faculty, and one for the Institute of Statistics. The buildings will be regarded as one project, which it is hoped to complete by 1963, and will allow the sharing of accommodation and services.

PACKAGING CENTRE. A Packaging Centre was opened recently at 50 Poland Street, London, W.1, to act as a permanent display and information centre for the packaging industry. Its information service includes a reference library which is in the charge of ("under the command of") Col. A. D. Wintle, "late the 1st Royals".

Robert Frost has been appointed consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress. His duties include at least two public lectures at the Library and expert advice on its poetry collections.

Southport—Ladies only. An economy cut in the number of periodicals and newspapers at Southport Central Library has released two reading-room tables, which have now been reserved for the use of women only. Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

Thornaby excelled itself last year. After being for many years one of the few places in the country annually issuing less than 5 books per head of population, the 1957-58 report reveals that statistically it has moved into the higher bracket: population 23,500, issues 124,000.

A WALTER ELLIOT MEMORIAL LIBRARY has been proposed for Glasgow University. Contributions may be sent to any branch of the Bank of Scotland.

CHELMSFORD

GIFT TO THE BODLEIAN

The Chelmsford Borough Council has endorsed its Public Library and Museum Committee's recommendation that the library's copy (inherited from the Chelmsford Philosophical Society) of the Works of Julius Caesar, bound in vellum, and published in Venice by Aldus Manutius the Younger in 1573, should be given to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

The copy is of particular interest because it has been annotated by hand, originally by the first owner (perhaps a pupil of Aldus), who starts by saying that he began [his annotations?] in May, 1578, at Parenzo (a small seaside town in Istria, Near Venice) when the plague began to rage, while he was there as secretary on behalf of the Venetian Republic. He seems to have treated the book as especially valuable, because the diagrams and initial letters have been hand-coloured in contemporary water-colour of unusually high quality.

The second group of annotations were probably done by an Italian between 1588 and 1606 and consist of corrections to the 1573 edition made by one who had access to other editions and also to the actual manuscripts of Caesar's works.

Bound with the principal work is a rare tract, the "Caesaris oratio Vesontione habita" of Andreas Brentius, printed in Rome about 1481; and a broadside "La description & diuision de Gaule" in French and Latin, published in Paris about 1510.

The Chelmsford Corporation are to be congratulated on their enlightened and unselfish action in giving this valuable volume to one of the great national libraries. Had it remained in their Library it could never have had anything more than a curiosity value, since scholars would be unaware of its whereabouts. Placed in the Bodleian amongst kindred editions and manuscripts, it may shed light on their history and ownership and will doubtless make its own contribution to scholarship and research.

LONDON

SEEING STARS

The London Planetarium, Marylebone Road, N.W.1, informs us that they are receiving a considerable number of enquiries from librarians in all parts of the country for information on their presentations. They welcome such enquiries and would be pleased to hear from any librarians who would like to be kept regularly informed of details of presentations. In addition, the London Planetarium runs an information service on astronomical matters (Tel. Hunter 1121-5).

PACKING THEM IN

So many students are now using the two central reference departments at Leeds that the limit of seating accommodation that can be provided in the library building has been reached. Frequently the main reading room is filled by 9.30 in the morning and remains full until the evening. Rooms not normally open to the public have had to be pressed into service to house the overflow of readers, and at certain times the libraries vie with the local cinemas in having a queue waiting for the doors to open. In the Commerce and Technology library some readers are having to use radiators as makeshift desks and the less fortunate ones count themselves lucky to have even a chair.

It was explained that the student population in and around Leeds has expanded to the point where it has outstripped the seating accommodation that can be offered by the City Libraries and that the only solution is for additional facilities to be provided by the colleges.

LEEDS

MANIFEST(O) MADNESS

A cutting from the manifesto published by the Conservatives in Leeds in connection with the recent local government election raises the question of the way in which local government often fails to appreciate the real purpose of libraries.

In a confused and badly worded statement this publication goes on to quote the following recently purchased books:

The Transactions of the Royal Entomological Society
Relics of St. Cuthbert
Der Grosse Brockhaus
Catalogue of pre-1800 music.

All of these are well justified in a major reference library; their total cost was well under £300.

The quality of these books is acknowledged but the manifesto concludes: "when Leeds ratepayers are being called upon to pay an increased rate isn't it about time these expensive books—read once a year or even less—were cut out?" That the more responsible elements in this party allowed the publication of this nonsense (even for an election) hardly reflects to their credit.

WARRINGTON

SERVICE TO SCIENCE

In the Warrington *Book News*, Mr. G. A. Carter, the Chief Librarian outlines his ideas on the way in which a public library can assist in the Government's campaign to increase the supply of scientists and engineers. Every month the library sends 1,500 technical and scientific books to people employed in local industry with the result that there is a considerable increase in the number and scope of enquiries on a variety of scientific, technical and commercial subjects.

All this is based on a comprehensive stock of books, pamphlets and periodicals, a complete set of British Standards, encyclopaedias and year books on many subjects, trade and commercial directories; standard textbooks, Government reports, statistics, newspaper cuttings file, a complete set of British telephone directories and many foreign ones, and last, but not least, back files of periodicals. Over 300 journals are taken by the library. A panel of translators is at the service of the readers, there is a photocopying service and a microfilm reader.

Mr. Carter would probably be the first to admit that there is nothing new in all these activities but *Liaison* gives credit to a variety of services aimed in accordance with the national need, pursued with vigour and succeeding with the right kind of publicity in reaching the target.

NORWICH

BOOKS ARE THEIR MEMORIAL

Norwich Public Libraries have recently been granted a sum of £1,000 for the purchase of American books. This forms the first part of the memorial to the men of the 2nd Air Division, U.S.A.F., who lost their lives while serving in Norfolk bases during the war. In 1945 the Division decided to have as its memorial a specially designed entrance hall in the new Norwich Central Library, where their Roll of Honour could be displayed and special rooms where American books and periodicals could be consulted. For thirteen years they have, with incredible patience, been waiting to see the new library built. They have now deposited the Roll of Honour temporarily in the City Hall, and have made this generous grant of books in token of the special American collection which will be placed in the new Central Library. The American Ambassador, in handing over the Roll of Honour to the care of the City, also presented the first part of the gift—a deluxe edition of the *Encyclopedia Americana*.

HUCKNALL

SHADES OF OLD BEN CAUNT

Hucknall, Notts., a small coal-mining district of 25,000 population, is the scene of one of those sad little battles over what is usually termed in official language 'a threatened amenity'. For 70 years "a neat, flower-decorated room which is part of the Hucknall Free Library has been traditionally reserved for the older men", in their seventies and eighties, "to meet daily to chat, smoke and play dominoes. They spend their mornings there, wander over to a nearby cafeteria for lunch, and then go back in the afternoon. They have even bought their own brass ash-trays for the room."

The threat has come from a committee's recommendation that the Library shall close on Saturdays, following a Nalgo request for a five-day week for the staff. If final approval is given the five-day week—and with it the Saturday closing—will begin in September.

Let us run it . . .

The men reacted strongly to the idea and their 75-year-old leader said: "We are going to ask the Council to meet a deputation. If the staff must have their Saturdays off, then we'll run the Library for them. I reckon we could manage it." One Councillor objected that the closing would inconvenience many people; Saturday was the busiest day of the week for the library; "but it's the rebuff to the old men that has made the people really mad". Later the men were saying they would fight the decision "like old Ben Caunt". (Ben Caunt is buried in the churchyard opposite the library; he was a world prize-fight champion of the bare-knuckle days.)

The debate continues.

B.B.C. REITH LECTURES 1958

"The Individual and the Universe" is the title of the 1958 Reith Lectures, which are to be given by A. C. B. Lovell, F.R.S. (Professor of Radio Astronomy in the University of Manchester and Director of the Jodrell Bank Experimental Station), in the B.B.C. Home Service on Sunday evenings at 9.15 p.m. beginning on November 9th. The lecturer will describe the universe as it is revealed by contemporary astronomical techniques and will relate the findings of science to religious and philosophic views on the individual's place in the universe.

Prof. Lovell is a West Country man, educated at Kingswood Grammar School, Bristol, and went to Manchester University as Physics lecturer in 1936 and has recently become well known in connection with the tracking of the earth satellites using the Jodrell Bank radio telescope.

"Once upon a time . . ."

Edgar Osborne, by any standard a bookman *par excellence*, has received from Nottingham University the honorary degree of Master of Arts, a distinction which will give pleasure to the many who have known him in libraries and librarianship.

When Osborne went to Derbyshire County in 1923 he had a staff of two assistants and 12,000 books; at his retirement as County Librarian in 1953 he directed a staff of 165 and there were a million books in his 42 libraries. And this was no exercise in Parkinson's Law; it was one measure of the growth and strength of the book service which Osborne had brought to a county rich in contrast and character. But by the time of his retirement Osborne was more than just a figure in professional librarianship; he had earned high regard as an antiquarian book-collector. Barely eight weeks ago the newspapers published an account of the discovery of a 2nd Edition of Bacon's *Essays*, a rarity worth probably several thousand pounds, which had been unearthed in a room behind a disused chapel in Warwick. The finder was Osborne, now 68, who had been working among some of the 30,000 books at Arbury Hall.

But it is the Once-Upon-a-Time world of children's books that must hold Edgar Osborne's abiding affection and in which he has gained for himself a respected authority. Osborne shared with his wife an intense interest in children's books which they indulged by collecting around them an unrivalled "representative library of bygone days", from a *Catechisme* for children printed in 1590 to Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*, which was first published in 1901. Their yardstick for including a book in the collection was that it should have been read and re-read by succeeding generations of children. Oldest book of all is a 1506 copy of Aesop's *Fables* with woodcuts executed about 1475 and probably enjoyed by children who could not read one word of the Latin text.

During an A.L.A. Conference in Canada in 1934 the Osbornes met Miss Lillian Smith, then head of the Boys' and Girls' division of the Toronto Public Library, and it was through this meeting with Lillian Smith that the Osbornes came to decide that the Toronto library should house their now priceless treasures. In 1949 Osborne sent the eighteen hundred books to Toronto to be preserved as a Collection and as a memory to his wife who had died in 1946. The books went to Toronto on certain conditions: that they be carefully preserved and made available to interested persons (although the books cannot be borrowed and the library is not used by children); that a full-time librarian be appointed to add to the Collection as and when possible and to publish a catalogue. All of the conditions have been fulfilled and the catalogue is due to be published this summer.

Can Osborne put "in a sentence" his impressions of nearly a lifetime's browsing through the books that were written for yesterday's children? This is what Osborne wrote about three years ago: "*All healthy children run and like running. They not only run with their legs, they run with their minds also; and therefore the best books for children—those they like best—are those that allow their minds to go at a gallop.*"

"The time allowed for reading this book is fourteen days, excluding the day of issue. A borrower detaining the book beyond the time allowed will be fined one penny for the first week or portion of a week, subsequently fines increase in arithmetical progression in agreement with the week of over-detention, and all fines cumulate." (*A current date label.*)

"The battle for libraries in technical colleges seems a fair way to being won." (*Principal of Brixton School of Building.*)

"The practice of library co-operation has now been brought to such a fine art that only the other day when we rang up a neighbouring library for something that was wanted in more than a hurry, we received the reply—'Start walking along your side of Grosvenor Street and I'll meet you on the corner.'" (*Talk on a special library in London's West End.*)

"Operating a library without publicity is like winking at a girl in the dark." (*Booklist from Toledo, U.S.A.*)